INVESTIGATION OF TUNGABHADRA PROJECT

Mr. P. Siva Rao:—"Mr. President, I have the honour to move the resolution which runs thus :—

'*This Council recommends to the Government that investigation and sanction of the 'Tungabhadra Project' as recommended by the Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee may be taken up immediately.*'

"Hon. Members of this Council are aware of the fact that we are living in a famine zone. The Ceded Districts form part and parcel of an area which is visited perpetually by famine and scarcity every alternate year. Now, Sir, in season and out of season, we have been asking that the Tungabhadra waters on the borders of our district should be utilized for some permanent irrigation scheme, an widespread irrigation scheme not merely for the Bellary district but the whole of the Ceded districts. The question has been agitated from time to time; motion after motion has been adopted in this Legislative Council; profuse sympathies have been personally expressed by His Excellency the Governor; deputations have waited on Ministers and Executive Councillors; but except a showering of sympathies, nothing substantial has been done. I may in this connexion refer to the recommendations of the Irrigation Committee which as early as 1901 recommended that the scheme should be investigated thoroughly. A Chief Engineer was appointed, but after two years' deliberation, the Government said that Government were giving preference to the Cauvery Reservoir, and this scheme was therefore deferred. Again, a few years ago, the matter was again brought to the notice of the Legislative Council, the resolution was accepted by the Government and the Committee known as the Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee was appointed to report on the matter. Among the distinguished personalities that formed the Committee were the third Minister who was the President of the Committee and the second Minister who was a member. I was also a member of the Committee. We gave a unanimous report and waited for the formal approval of the Government to the same. We were told, Sir, that there was a conference consisting of the members of the Board of Revenue, and some officials to enquire into the matter and as the result of the deliberations of that conference some expert had been deputed to study the suitability of the site for irrigation scheme. We are very anxious to know what the opinion of the expert has been. In commending this resolution to the unanimous acceptance of the House, I dare say the hon. the Law Member will give sympathetic consideration to the famine conditions in our district. I may say, Sir, that at this length of time we want to ascertain definitely what steps have been taken and will be taken, what definite proposal has been made and when the definite sanction of Government to the scheme will be given. I hope the hon. the Law Member will associate himself with this scheme for the amelioration of the condition of the famine-stricken people in our district. He has associated himself with the Mettur scheme, a protective scheme—I am not jealous of it—and I hope he would also associate himself with this scheme, a productive scheme. Government have spent from 1876 up to this moment large sums for famine relief. Let them consider the loss of revenue to the Government and the waste that has been going on in our districts. The time is now come when steps should be taken in this matter. There is no use of vague expressions of sympathy or promise. We expect the hon. the Law Member to chalk

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out a definite programme. With these words, Sir, I commend the resolution to the acceptance of the House."

* Mr. R. NAGAN GOWDA :—" Mr. President, Sir, I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution that has been moved by the hon. Mr. Siva Rao. I would like to state that last year Rs. 25,000 were sanctioned for this work, but so far nothing has been done. Only a thousand rupees had been spent as late as last December. Indeed as late as May last year the grant was not communicated to the Public Works Department. But then by that time the monsoon had set in and the river was in floods and investigation of dam site was not possible.

"The most important thing that has to be done yet and that ought to have been done last year was the investigation of the dam site, the new dam site that has been selected. The first thing that has to be done before the project is investigated is the investigation of the dam site. After the commencement of the monsoon they cannot do any work and unless the work is commenced immediately in right earnest and the work taken up nothing can be done later. And the result will be you will have to wait for another year. 3 p.m.

"It is only for two and a half months that the river runs low and it is then that the kind of strata that exists in that part of the river where the anicut is proposed to be built can be examined. At present the Bellary division of the Public Works Department is to take care of this whole work. It happens that the Hospet subdivision of the Public Works Department is given charge of this work. As a matter of fact I know that Hospet is heavily burdened with work and it has more work than any other subdivision. To add this work to that subdivision is to make that work impossible. Therefore I suggest that as a first step in the starting of this project Government should immediately start a division with an Executive Engineer in charge of it and the work should be commenced immediately. That would be an earnest first step and that ought to be the first step in starting this Thungabhadra project investigation. I therefore have great pleasure in seconding this proposition."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—"I want to request the hon. the Law Member who lays down his high office shortly to assure this House that he would appoint a special establishment to investigate, and place the scheme with plan and estimate before the Government and get their sanction."

* The hon. Sir C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—" Mr. President, Sir, the hon. Member, Mr. Siva Rao, gave notice of an adjournment motion on the same subject in the August session. Mr. Campbell who was then the Member in charge of the subject explained the position. The Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee did not put forward the original Tungabhadra project, but suggested the construction of a reservoir in Timmalagur which is distinct from the original scheme. The establishment sanctioned having been found to be inadequate, the Chief Engineer applied for additional staff on the 13th October 1927. Various other hindrances were experienced one of which was the prevalence of plague in the locality. Plague having abated, on the 12th September the Chief Engineer was asked to push on and on the 7th January he was asked—what my hon. Friend Mr. Nagan Gowda just asked—to consider the desirability of putting an Executive Engineer in charge with the requisite staff and carry out the preliminary work. Not content with that the Government have asked the Board of Revenue to ascertain the demand of

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water and to submit a preliminary report speedily. This memorandum of the Chief Engineer has been placed on the Council table. On the 3rd January the third Minister who has been taking a live interest along with the second Minister, wrote a note, a valuable note, if I may be permitted to say so. That has been again submitted to the Chief Engineer for report and lastly steps are being taken to have an Executive Engineer in charge of the project. In addition to that I may point out that preliminary work is going on at the dam site. This is the information I have received within the last week and we are digging a long trench to enable the foundations to be laid bare for the Geologist's visit which is expected very soon. It will thus be seen from a summary of what has taken place in the locality that we have taken steps to investigate the Tungabhadra Project. If my hon. Friend, Mr. Siva Rao, will omit the words 'and sanction' because at present we cannot accept it, I shall have no hesitation in accepting the resolution as follows :

'This Council recommends to the Government that investigation of the Tungabhadra Project as recommended by the Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee may be taken up immediately.'"

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—"I formally move that the words 'and sanction' be omitted."

Mr. R. NAGAN GOWDA :—"I second it."

Mr. P. SIVA RAO :—"I accept the amendment."

The amendment was accepted.

The resolution as amended was then taken up for discussion.

*Mr. B. RAMACHANDRA REDDI :—"I am constrained to oppose this motion, Sir, because I do object to the wording of the resolution. It is here said 'that the Council recommends to the Government that investigation of the Tungabhadra Project as recommended by the Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee may be taken up immediately'. I wish to take you back to the days when this Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee was appointed to make an enquiry. At that time it will be remembered that an humble protest had been raised by me that the Nellore district which was according to Morgan's report included in the Tungabhadra Project area had been excluded, and that no representation had been given to the Nellore district. Later on when the preliminary report came forth it was pointed out to this House that the exclusion of Nellore district would mean the loss of a good deal of revenue to the Government accruing from this project. It has been pointed out by Mr. Hawkins, the then Chief Engineer, that without Nellore district the scheme will not be remunerative. According to the final report of this Committee, Nellore district has been given a very secondary place, a very insignificant place. The very fact that the district was not allowed to be represented on the Committee shows the apathy of the Government towards Nellore district. It has been patent that the claims of the district have been completely neglected and the final report as it emerged later on showed it. There were, of course, four projects which included Nellore district also. But by the time these projects were given attention to, the question of Nellore district would be completely forgotten. When I oppose the resolution in this form it is my intention to see that Nellore district also should be included when the question of the Tungabhadra project is taken up and when the project is worked up. As it is, I find there

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will be no prospect of the Nellore district being benefited by this project. It is my earnest wish that Nellore district may also be included and without it the resolution cannot be accepted, at least by me."

* The hon. Diwan Bahadur R. N. Arogyaswami Mudaliyar :—" My only excuse for intervening in this debate is that I find that the hon. Member is making a mistake as to the recommendation of the Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee. What the Committee recommended was that there should not be two different schemes for the Tungabhadra and Kistna. They recommended what they called the Tungabhadra-Kistna scheme of which the Tungabhadra project as modified by them was one part. Nellore and other parts would also come into the scheme as recommended by them. My hon. Friend apparently has not seen the recommendations of the Committee. The Nellore part would have its turn in the scheme of execution recommended by the Ceded Districts Irrigation Committee. If my hon. Friend had seen the report, he would have noticed that the Ceded Districts themselves have not been given absolute preference. The main idea that actuated the Ceded Districts Committee in making their recommendation was to make the combined schemes as far as possible a productive one, a scheme which, although it may not turn out absolutely productive, would not be a source of loss to Government. The original Tungabhadra project, as hon. Members are aware, was a scheme that involved a large annual recurring loss to Government and the Committee considered that it was their duty, as far as possible, to evolve a scheme that would not only minimise the loss but which might at the same time be remunerative—at least one that would not involve any loss to Government. For that reason they recommended what they called the Tungabhadra-Kistna scheme—one single unit consisting of different parts. I do not think it is necessary to take up the time of the House by going into the details. But I may be permitted to assure the hon. Member from Nellore that Nellore was not specifically excluded from the scope of the Tungabhadra-Kistna project. Although the Committee recommended that it may be possible to supply Nellore with a single reservoir from Tungabhadra, they said that if the time comes and irrigation develops to a certain extent, when, it may be found that a single reservoir was insufficient, it would be time enough to go in for another reservoir. But they expect that by constructing a dam from the site on the Kistna river which they recommended, to divert the combined waters of the Tungabhadra and Kistna, they would get enough water ordinarily for the Nellore district for the first crop. On the point, whether an additional reservoir was necessary, they had not the necessary information nor the staff to procure it, but they recommended that it should form part of the combined project—the Tungabhadra-Kistna project."

The resolution as amended was put and carried.

THE MADRAS NURSES AND MIDWIVES ACT 1926.*

The Zamindar of Seithur :—" As the object of my resolution has already been put into operation I withdraw the resolution of which I have given notice, viz,—

'This Council recommends to the Government that the Madras Nurses and Midwives Act, 1926, be brought into operation immediately'."

The resolution was deemed to have been withdrawn.